

MR. NICHOLS: All right, great. Thank you. My name is Jeremy Nichols. I'm the Climate and Energy Program Director for Wild Earth Guardians. Those are some tough acts to follow. But, I'll do the best I can here. I want to thank you all for coming out today. And thank you for hearing us out. I want to acknowledge everybody in the audience today. I think their presence here speaks to the fact that there's a lot of concern over the future and a lot of concern over how the reforms of the Interior Department are weighing will affect the future of coal here in Colorado. I'm not going to lie. Wild Earth Guardians supports keeping coal in the ground. We have a climate crisis on our hands. And it means we need an all hands on deck approach to reducing carbon admissions. One of the most effective ways to do that is by keeping coal in the ground, keeping it from being extracted in the first place, keeping it from exacting a tremendous toll on our society. But, I want to be clear that keeping coal in the ground doesn't mean that we turn our backs on the workers and communities that have worked very hard for many, many years to keep out lights on. We need to focus on transition. We need to help workers and communities transition to more prosperous and sustainable economies. This reform process provides an opportunity for the Interior Department to take a leadership role in helping to make that happen. Things are not looking good moving forward here. Right now in Colorado, as you've heard, mines have been shut down. Two of the three mines in the North Fork Valley have been shut down. The third one laid off 80 workers. Two of the biggest coal companies in the State are now in bankruptcy. The State itself is set to see a 40-year low in coal production. The signs -- the writing on the wall does not seem to indicate that things are going to turn around, particularly as coal is up against cleaner and more affordable sources of electricity. I think it's high time to get serious about the need to move on from coal. And I know that that's a hard reality for many to hear and a hard position for many to embrace. But, as coal -- as the coal industry collapses, it does not seem to be -- there doesn't seem to be any other option. The alternative is to let the industry collapse and let the disaster befall communities here in the West. And I think we're already seeing glimpses of that right now. And it's very distressing to see. You'll hear that. And you've heard that already. And we will be hearing it more

today. We have an opportunity to take the bull by the horn, so to speak, and steer things in a better direction, take control of the situation, and advance an orderly and effective transition strategy. Not just let disaster befall communities. So, we strongly urge the Interior Department to put keeping coal in the ground as a priority of its reform efforts, but also make transition part and parcel with that imperative. I think we need to do both. And we cannot turn our backs on communities and workers that have, as I said, worked so hard to keep the lights on over the years. So, thank you for your time. Thank you for hearing us out. We look forward to weighing in on the remainder of the process. Thank you.